

A Paper on Difference of Mental Health Among Employed Women and House-Wives in Pakistan: Stress

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Abstract

The paper was set to determine the level variation of stress within two type of females' groups that is paid work and house wives of Pakistan. It was supposed that "A significant difference will be found between working-women and non-working women on the variable stress. The sample of 250 working and non-working-females had been taken from various commercial and residential areas of city of Karachi, Pakistan via technique of purposive sampling. This group of 250 women was divided in to two equal numbers of 125 working and 125 non working-women. Their age range was 28 years to 45 years. The Mean (M) age of the sample was 34.126 and the Standard deviation (SD) was 4.129. The permission from the respective authorities was taken adapting the proper procedure. An informed consent from these female subjects and the demographic forms had got furnished. To gauge the stress, Lovibond and Lovibond, DASS (1995) had been administered, one by one. In order to interpret and analyze the data, Descriptive statistics and t-test had been applied, through SPSS V 16. This had been the result that employed women were found prone to have stress than the counterpart i.e. house wives, in Pakistan.

Keywords: Stress; working women; Non-Working-Women; mental health; Pakistan.

1. Introduction

According to World Health Organization (2006) healthy people are not necessarily those who are not suffering from any illness or disability, but they should feel well physically, mentally and socially.

Livinbond (1995) explained that stress is characterized by over-aroused, tense, unable to relax, touchy, easily get upset, irritability, easily startled, nervy, jumpy, fidgety and intolerant of interruption or delay".

According to Selye (1956) who contributed in stress research by his model of stress called 'general adaptation syndrome suggests: physical response which is known as stress is caused by different environmental stressor. The model explains how one's body defends itself from stress. It consists of three stages:

Alarm reaction is the condition of a person to fight or flight in which body's sympathetic nervous system activates.

Second stage of resistance; People find alternatives to cope the stress and the duration of this stage depends on the severity of the stress, in this stage there is a high chance of prolonged resistance and neurological and hormonal changes that may lead to changes in immune system and take shape of infection.

The Third Stage is General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS); this is also known as exhaustion, in which a person fails to cope with the stress and breaks down. In this case there may be an occurrence of severe psychological problems such as depression and even also cause death.

According to Silva's (2010) Study, mental disorders e.g. stress, currently, become fourth among other diseases, which cause burden and a foremost reason of disability worldwide such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases lead to physical disabilities. Mental disorders are not a major cause of death; they do affect the living of standards for the individuals, a hazard for suicide and often deteriorates the outcome of various other physical setbacks.

Ali, Khan, and Munaf (2013) pointed out in a study that Women's mental health is considered as a primary concern by merely all women's health care givers because of the higher prevalence of mental disorders in women. The results of some studies highlight that how gender differences go together and intensified by the economic variations and increased income disproportion; considered to be associated with mental disorders prevailing in working-women.

On the one hand, a study on *working mother's health and house wives (2006)* stated that in general there were drawbacks of lack of security for the wellbeing of women; their mental health is likely to get more affected as they are more sensitive towards criticism and negativity. Since, non working women, have little exposure and they tend to avoid socially distressing situations. Social pressure and anxiety combined with fear of negative evaluation deteriorates the mental health of women in general. On the other hand, WHO's report (2006) argued that economic autonomy as well as temporary absence from home is the factors which may help the working women to cope up effectively. Despite that, working women's mental health is hampered because of facing the

stressful situation, which is inevitable in the working situation. Moreover, women who do not work, spend a lot of time with their family members; hence, their emotional bond is much stronger which helps them remain mentally fit and healthy (Nordqvist, (2006).

However, according to the study on *Marital adjustment, stress and depression* (2014), employment has improved the status of women economically and professionally. Continuous out of home exposure and other similar occasions have also helped them effectively cope with social distressing situations. Hence, it was found that female teachers could cope up with ordinary demands and stresses of life pretty well (The World Bank 2012).

The findings of a study reported a strong correlation with mental illness and adjust problems with stress. Since, working women adopt different roles at the home and at the work place; they experience sustained stress which negatively affect their psychological well-being. Irrespective of the fact that they are earning member of the family, mental distress of women remains unacknowledged within the families, employed women are to be underestimated in mental problem (The World Bank 2012).

Hussain, (2008) revealed that most of the areas of Pakistan's society, people live in joint family system compelling strictly follow the norms. The joint family system in Pakistan and India strongly influence the habitants. There are two out of ten families who avoid sending their female children to schools due to the adherence of old conservative customs and traditions. Since they think that why a woman should get education as education is only necessary for work purpose and there is no use of it in their daily lives. The non working-women are having lesser liberty, facility of mobility and access to civilized quality of life as they are compelled to live within the four walls (Zehra, 2002). A recent study of Women's mental health found that over 189 million Pakistani populations, the proportion of female is 52%. The literacy rate of females in Pakistan is significantly low i.e. about 1.8 %. It is due to lack of attention by the successive Governments. A very low percentage of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is allocated for education in Pakistan, which is alarming. Furthermore, access to education for females is another major issue in Pakistan.

However, education in urban areas is bit easier as compared to rural areas of Pakistan. In the rural areas schools are far away from home and have no proper transport facility and those, which are there, have fewer resources to educate their children.

Although, currently working-women are not as much bounded as they were in the past and they are enjoying most of their liberties and rights as provided by constitution of Pakistan and International Charter of Fundamental Human Rights. Especially in developed areas of Pakistan e.g. Karachi and Islamabad, girls are getting educational privileges equally in the schools, colleges and universities side by side with boys. Alvi, (2010); Hussain, (2008) stated in their discussion that currently, the boundaries between working and non working-women are being broken by rising awareness through media. Globalization is exerting a positive change in the life of women living in the villages and cities. However, it is also observed that females are still the target of victimization at various places in urban areas as well. It was also found out that those females, who work and living in the cities still facing difficulties to get admission in schools, institutes and getting jobs.

On the other hand, People permanently living in urban areas respect and value their women to be a part of earning member of family and their status is comparatively improved in comparison to the past. Agha, (2004) argued that such positive attitude towards working women shelters them from feeling of rejection and being failure or mental illness. They feel confident and honorable.

Unlike, the Western society, Abraham, (2011) highlighted that Pakistan's society has a male dominant culture, where a male is responsible for financial and domestic matters. Males are perceived as the responsible and powerful person. It is further observed that people in Pakistan and India feel emotionally upset, on the birth of a daughter whereas, on the birth of a son is taken as a source of celebration.

It was also observed that initially, people avoid to get marry with a girl who was working but now they look for a working spouse as she could serve as a supporting hand and nurture her children in a better way than a traditional housewife. Now, people acknowledge the working women's contribution to combat the financial needs of their families that is assumed as the guarantee of prosperous future of their families.

The case in the conventional areas in which women were supposed to stay at home and men had to earn the livelihood for their family that is still working out in many rural areas of Pakistan.

These variations seem to have a stronger impact on lower middle class families than working and upper class families. Aslam (2007); Zehra, (2002) defined the difference of socio economic status and the level of disadvantages in the housewives' status. It was spelled that females who belong to upper and middle socioeconomic strata of Pakistan are keen to have social, political and economic benefits. Meanwhile, some females from the upper and lower class also enjoy social, political and economic status. Zeab (2011) mentioned that most of the females who belong to the elite families have different types of apprehensions, such as they have no burden of households responsibilities due to servants and have no need to do a job for financial gains, rather they have worries regarding dependency on their husbands and they feel insecure of being neglected by the husband due to a second woman.

Aslam (2007) found that in the last decade, the professional literature has addressed employed and

household women on a continuum. A working- woman, generally, has a higher level of formal education, a higher level of income, and more social relations than the counterpart. A working-woman also typically lives in a resource-rich environment and has greater access to prenatal care and public transportation. The reduced geographical distance between family and friends for the working-women results in lesser social isolation as compared to the non working-women. These characteristics may have a negative impact on the non working-women who may be lesser able to read and understand patient education materials, afford or access routine healthcare and attend regular appointments. These factors may negatively influence the woman's attempt to deal with unfamiliar symptoms and life challenges.

Alavi (2010) studied that in India, Pakistan, Srilanka and Malaysia, most of the dominating positions are in males' hands and females are just passive part of the society. Mostly females married through an arranged marriage system within the families and they have no choice to give their inputs to their parents or family's (Biraderis) decision. No female particularly in rural areas can run her business without the "saya" (shelter) of a male. Moreover, in the poorer areas daughters are sold for monetary purposes to their future husbands who sell them after divorce.

In spite having enough potential and talent in the working females, there is insufficient mental health research efforts, currently, exist in Pakistan. This paper for mental health research recognizes that there is still much more work to do in building the research capacity in the area of mental health, especially in the segment of employed women's mental health. The researches on this subject on the targeted population may enhance the relevancy of research; and to ensure it is used to support practice and policy.

The paper also considered that, there has been a shortage of corporation among mental health disciplines in the planning and carrying out of research initiatives. The study paid attention to the life sciences, including women-mental health research. It may hold a prime promise maximizing women's overall health and minimizing the social and economic effects to the ailments.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the difference of the level of stress among working and non-working women, living in Karachi, Pakistan. Early studies suggested that working women are likely susceptible to being sexually discriminated and harassed at the work place. They might feel more stressed and they are likely to be mentally instable compared to non working females.

The present study will evaluate the significance of the factors those cause stress among working or non-working females. Such as working environment, safety hazards at work place, job/financial insecurity, gender discrimination and lack of gratification of the needs and attention. The results of the study will be helpful to review the prevailing norms, which are contaminating the system and the society. The myths could be addressed and replaced by the modern realities; which are globally under practiced.

The objectives of the present study are to examine the differences between mental health status of working and non working women in Pakistan. For this purpose the author selected the variable of stress, since this factor is very important for working women all over the world and in Pakistan as well. This study will further evaluate that whether, those women who utilize their knowledge and skills at work place suffer more often from stress or the work puts a positive effect on their mental health? Previous researches mentioned above, showed that working women have lesser psychological problem as compared to those who are at home and don not have any outlet to utilize their potentials and resources. Further the findings of this study would be helpful for psychologists to understand the phenomenon in better way, and thereby to help women in different discipline.

Considering the past researches, it was hypothesized that:

The working-women will score higher on the variable of Stress as compare to non-working women.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

The sample for the current study was taken from Karachi city. Since, Karachi is considered as a capital of province named Sindh. Karachi is a multi populated city of Pakistan and the people who belong from different areas around Pakistani come to earn a living for their families here. Since, ample and multi cultured people live in the city the data of this city may has a significant value to generalize as Pakistan's sample. An easily available of targeted women such as teaching, non-teaching staff, medical, paramedical staff and house wives were chosen from various commercial organizations including, Jhangeer Siddiqui Bank Ltd, Cresguard Systems (Pvt) Ltd, Fulcrum pvt Ltd as well as Jinnah Hospital. A total sample of 250 women was taken for the study. It was further broken in to two groups of 125 non-working women and 125 working-women. The age range was between 28 to 45 years ($M=34.12$; $SD=4.12$) for entire sample. The sample's minimum level of education was 14 years.

2.2 Measures

2.3 Demographic Sheet

In order to explain the implications of the study, researchers must gather the personal information of the participant such as marital status, education, age, income, occupation and family structure etc. To collect the demographic information of the women, a demographic form was written and given to the women.

2.4 Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS, 1995)

Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) had created the scale DASS. The scale was designed to measure the three dimensional self report emotional illness; state of depression, anxiety and stress. There are 14 items in DASS to measure stress.

The Stress items gauge the degree of chronic unspecified arousal. It also helps to determine difficulty level to relax, nervous arousal, and being easily agitated and impatient.

“DASS, Gamma coefficient for overall factor (total scores) is 0.71 for depression, 0.86 for anxiety and 0.88 for stress”.

“Reliability of DASS is considered as high that is 0.71 for depression, 0.79 for anxiety and 0.81 for stress” (Lovinbon & Lovinbond, 1995).

The participants are asked to reply at 4-point Likert scale rating the limit to which they have gone through the state over the past one week. The scores of stress are computed by adding up.

DASS urdu version was administered, translated, since, urdu is considered as widely spoken language around Pakistan. The Reliability and the Validity of the original Scale is determined as strong (Farooqi, & Habib, 2010).

3. Procedure

In order to collect the data of working women, first of all, multiple commercial organizations were approached. The organizational heads were explained the purpose of the research and a ‘Request of permission to collect the data, was also be asked. The telephonic and e-mail permissions were taken. The letters of consent were given to the non-working females in physical presence. Secondly, in the view of obtained official permission, the samples were approached comfortably and then individually briefed the reason of the research. They were told the ethics of research participation as a volunteer subject. The women were informed that they could withdraw their participation at any time. The confidentiality of the findings was also being rest assured. Thirdly, they were requested to sign the consent form to participate in the research. A demographic form containing personal questions such as age, marital status, education, socioeconomic status, income, family structure, occupation, profession was asked to fill. Each participant was interviewed separately (one participant at a time). All of the participant’s marital status was constant; married. Finally, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (1965) was administered to the participant women to gauge their self-esteem.

The women, who were taken as a control group in the study, were approached at their homes and universities (students). They had no background history of paid work. The same procedure was applied to gather the information from non-working women, just as for working women.

4. RESULTS

Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS; V 16) was brought forward to analyze the information. 0.05 was the significant level for entire analysis. In order to evaluate the level of differences among the variables, *t-test* was applied. To interpret the results Descriptive statistics was opted.

The *t-test* indicates that working-women showed higher mean scores on the variable of stress than the mean scores of non-working women.

Table 4.1

Table 4.1 shows frequencies and percentages distribution of non-working and working-women regarding their age ranged between 28 years to 45years.

Age	None-Working-Women		Working-Women		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
28	5	4	5	4	10	4
29	4	3	4	3	8	3
30	16	13	16	13	32	13
31	14	12	14	12	28	12
32	6	5	6	5	12	5
33	10	8	9	8	19	8
34	13	10	13	10	26	10
35	13	10	14	10	27	10
36	9	7	9	7	18	7
37	8	6	8	6	16	6
38	2	2	2	2	4	2
39	11	9	11	9	22	9
40	5	4	5	4	10	4
43	4	3	4	3	8	3
44	4	3	4	3	8	3
45	1	1	1	1	2	1
Total	125	100.00%	125	100.00%	250	100.00%

Table 2

Table 2 presents the M and SD of the entire sample.

Age	Non-Working-Women	Working-Women	Total
N	125	125	250
Mean	34.46	34.47	34.126
Std. Deviation	4.138	4.136	4.129

Table 4.3

Shows frequencies and percentages of non-working and working-women according their education and main subjects, e.g. commerce, arts, business and computer sciences.

Education	Non-Working Women		Working Women		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
B.Com	64	51.2	16	12.8	80	3.2
BA	1	.8	6	4.8	7	.3
BBA	6	4.8	4	3.2	10	.4
BDS	3	2.4	12	9.6	15	.6
BSc	9	7.2	13	10.0	22	0.9
LLB	1	.8	19	15.2	19	.8
MA	6	4.8	6	4.8	7	.3
M.Com	2	1.6	5	4.0	11	.4
MA I.R	3	2.4	9	7.2	9	.4
Master	30	24.0	15	12.0	17	.7
MBBS	--	--	11	8.8	14	.6
MSc	--	--	9	7.2	39	1.6
Total	125	100.00%	125	100.00%	250	100.00%

Table 4.4

Mean Scores of working and Non-Working women on the variable of Stress.

Variable	N	M	SD	SEM	T	Sig
Stress						
Non-Working	125	13.84	8.49	0.760	-6.22	.000***
Working	125	20.05	7.22	0.64		

Note: $df(248); p < .000***$

There is the statistically significant difference in the mean scores of Working and Non-Working women on the variables of Stress. The increment was seen on the working women's scores at the scale of stress.

The p-value is maximum probability accoutering in true probability-value is less than level of significance its mean significant relation between the variables.

5. DISCUSSION

Table no.4. 3 shows higher Mean Scores of the working-women than the non-working women on the variable of Stress. The hypothesis i.e. *the working-women will score higher on the variable of Stress as compared to the non-working women*, proved as true. Since, the results depict the statistically significant difference in the mean scores of working and non-working-women on the variables of Stress.

The p-value is maximum probability occurring in true value. The probability-value is less than the level of significance .It means significant relation between the variables is present.

According to Wells (2006) working women play various roles at homes and at the workplaces. Since, they have continuous stress and anxiety that affects their psychological well-being. The daily exposure of road traffic hazards, meeting deadlines of the working assignments and harassment at the work-place accumulate stress in the working-women. Besides the fact that they are earning members of the family, mental distress of women remains unacknowledged within the families, especially, in Pakistani culture. The families, generally do not value the employed female family members' mental problems. These women are considered as self sufficient people. Their dual services; the family's higher expectations and the work place responsibilities lead stress in them.

Hereby, the higher feeling of insecurity may be the reason of greater scores of stress in the working-women. Since, both factors of the mental illness complement to each other (Munchinsky, 2007).

5.1. Profession and the Mental Health of Women in Pakistan

The figures on the table no.4.3 show the frequencies and the percentages of the working-women and non-working-women regarding their profession. The percentage of medical practitioners and teachers is the highest. The second highest percentage also belongs to the medical field.

It seems that the professional females e.g. doctors and teachers have the higher work load due to the paucity of professional ladies in Pakistan, hence, the working ladies scored higher on the variable of stress. The higher rate of stress may be due to the frequent exposure of the daily challenges faced by the working-women in Pakistan.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the result's higher figures of the stress, the employed women are felt to be nervous and prone towards mental illness than house-wives. The finding of the study concludes the urge providing the emotional and financial security to the working women. The instable mental health affects the performance and the quality of life.

7. RECOMENDATIONS

These findings need to be re-researched with the new dimensions, in future. The sample group should include some major cities across Pakistan for example Peshawar, Lahore, Hyderabad and Quetta. It will give expansion to the study and also various professions for instance blue collar jobs such as house maids, female labor; factory workers may also be included in the future studies. Future studies should strongly requisite consideration of the relationship of the important demographic variables with stress among women.

The study is a road map for the researchers and scholars of Pakistan with few limitations. This study may be implemented by concern authorities especially, in organizations for policy making. Lastly, this study may be very beneficial for not only having a healthy organizational culture but also for societies and household issues.

As a result of paying attention to the issues which are ruled out in the current research, a moderate society may be promoted. The extremist practices could be turned down and the basic human rights be enjoyed.

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